



## Messiah Lutheran Church

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

February 12, 2023

*Time after time we are called through the scriptures to leave behind familiar and predictable ways of life, risking a journey into the unknown and unknowable. Risks often have a very big and exciting “upside” which is matched by an equally steep and daunting “downside.” Many good and faithful people have a healthy fear of risk, but taking a risk with God is a very different venture. If God’s call to follow is risky, and we succeed, we can experience God’s presence and promise in profound new ways. However, if we follow God’s call to risk and it seems to fail, then we are still following in the footsteps of the one who formed us, loves us, and calls us by name.*

*In Deuteronomy, Moses had taken a risk and led Israel out of slavery and toward the Promised Land. He encourages the people to continue to risk by choosing life in God as opposed to the lures of life without him. Paul risked his life time and time again in order share the gospel, and he is encouraging the people of the Corinth to risk walking a different route in Christ. In today’s gospel we hear Jesus offer tough teachings which may seem risky to preachers everywhere!*

*These readings all seem to be filled with tough, risky teachings, but dig a little deeper and we can experience the grace-filled message of hope and new life rooted in God’s love. We can clearly hear a call to risk, but also the promise of God’s steadfast presence to be with all who faithfully follow, no matter the outcome. So take a deep breath, dare to risk, crack open the “tough exterior” and experience the love and grace of these texts.*

## PRESERVICE MUSIC

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – *led by Mark Wilson*

**GATHERING SONG:** *“Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”* ELW 886

### CALL TO WORSHIP

God calls us to worship, and we come,  
**Some with laughter and hopefulness.**

God calls us to worship, and we come,  
**Some with hearts that feel sad and alone.**

God calls us to worship, and we come,  
**Some with worry and distraction.**

As God’s dearly loved children, we come,  
bringing our joy and pain, our hurt and hope.  
**We come to pray, and praise, and heal!**  
**Let us sing praise to the One who knows and loves us!**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE:** *ELW Holy Communion Setting 10, page 205*  
(Tune: Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee)



Glory be to God in heaven; peace, good-will to all the earth.  
Mighty God of all creation, Father of surpassing worth:  
We exalt you, we adore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
Saints and angels bow before you; here on earth our songs we raise.



Holy One we now acclaim you; Lord alone, to you we call;  
Holy One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:  
Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit, in the Father’s splendor bright.  
For the peace that we inherit, glory be to God on high!

### GREETING:

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Let us pray: **O God, you are the strength of all who hope in you. We can accomplish nothing good apart from you. Help us to see and understand the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

*The Lord sets before the people of God a clear choice. Life and prosperity will come to the faithful; loss of the land will be the consequence of disobedience. Choosing life entails loving and holding fast to the Lord. Life in God's presence presupposes the promise made to the ancestors.*

[Moses said to the people:] <sup>15</sup>See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. <sup>16</sup>If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. <sup>17</sup>But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup>I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup>I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, <sup>20</sup>loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 119:1-8

<sup>1</sup>Happy are those whose way is blameless,  
who walk in the law of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>**Happy are those who keep his decrees,  
who seek him with their whole heart,**

<sup>3</sup>who also do no wrong,  
but walk in his ways.

<sup>4</sup>**You have commanded your precepts  
to be kept diligently.**

<sup>5</sup>O that my ways may be steadfast  
in keeping your statutes!

<sup>6</sup>**Then I shall not be put to shame,  
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.**

<sup>7</sup>I will praise you with an upright heart,  
when I learn your righteous ordinances.

<sup>8</sup>**I will observe your statutes;  
do not utterly forsake me.**

## SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

*Human leaders in the church are not the ones who control ministry. Rather they are coworkers who belong to God, the one who truly controls and continuously empowers the ministry of the church.*

<sup>1</sup>Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "Celtic Alleluia"

*ELW Service Music #174*



## \*GOSPEL: Matthew 5:21-37

**L:** The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 5th chapter.

**C:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorts his followers to embrace standards of righteousness that exceed legal requirements and traditional expectations.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>21</sup>"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup>So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother

or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup>Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

<sup>27</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

<sup>31</sup>"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup>But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup>"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' <sup>34</sup>But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, <sup>35</sup>or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

**L:** The Gospel of the Lord.     **C:** Praise to you, O Christ.

**SERMON SONG: "Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways"     ELW 772**



1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!  
 2 Or - der my foot-steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;  
 3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;  
 4 Make me to walk in your com-mands, 'tis a de - light - ful road;



Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!  
 let sin have no do - min-ion, Lord, but keep my con-science clear.  
 and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan-d'ring sheep.  
 nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

**\*APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth,**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
And he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The holy catholic church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

**OFFERING**

**\*OFFERTORY: “We Are an Offering”**

*ELW 692*

**Chorus 1**

We lift our voices  
We lift our hands  
We lift our lives up to You  
We are an offering  
Lord use our voices  
Lord use our hands  
Lord use our lives they are Yours  
We are an offering

**Bridge**

All that we have  
All that we are  
All that we hope to be  
We give to You  
We give to You

## **Chorus 2**

We lift our voices  
We lift our hands  
We lift our lives up to You  
We are an offering  
We are an offering

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### **\*OFFERING PRAYER:**

**Living God, in your Son, you have given the world a radiant Light shining brightly in the darkness! Lead us onward in Light that we may share your warmth and grace with all people. Let our lives be an offering of love every day. We pray through Christ, the Light of the world. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS:**

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance! Therefore we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

Lord God, you reveal yourself to us in the reading of scripture. Fulfill your word through the faithful witness of your church. Send us out to bring your liberating good news to all people. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All creation proclaims your handiwork. Teach us to love the wonders of your creation. Inspire us to honor you as Creator in taking care of all that you have made. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You desire that there be no dissension among us. Where we are divided in our society, nation, or world, work to reunite us into one body. Ease conflict, dispel violence, and bring an end to war.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Anoint with your Spirit all who seek your favor. Grant provision and justice for people living in poverty, people living with disability, those living with pain, or those living under oppression.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Build up the body of Christ in this place. Empower us to freely welcome and deeply value each person who enters into worship and ministry among us. Bless the variety of ministries in this congregation, the work of our committees, and our newly formed Church Council.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift before you all who are sick and in need of your strength. Bring them your healing grace and light. Bless those who wait and pray with them – give them encouragement, comfort, and peace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**\*LORD’S PRAYER:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**\*BENEDICTION**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**\*SENDING SONG: “What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine” ELW 774**

**\*DISMISSAL:**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Thank you to our worship leaders,  
Mark Wilson and Brett Jorgensen!*

*We appreciate your leadership this morning!*